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STARTING ENGLISH EARLY--A GUIDE AND COMMENTARY.

BY- MCINTOSH, LOIS
CALIFORNIA UNIV., LOS ANGELES

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THIS GUIDE AND COMMENTARY DESCRIBES "STARTING ENGLISH EARLY," A 30-MINUTE COLOR FILM BASED ON THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF SPANISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN WHO MADE UP A DEMONSTRATION CLASS IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE OFFERED BY THE NDEA INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES DURING THE SUMMER OF 1966. THE PURPOSE OF THE FILM WAS TO DEMONSTRATE TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO CHILDREN OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE. THE LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES INVOLVED AND THE TEXT AND TEACHER'S NOTES FOR THE FIRST LESSON TAUGHT IN THE FILM ARE PRESENTED IN THIS GUIDE. THE AUTHOR'S SUMMARY POINTS OUT THAT--(1) WHILE BEING BILINGUAL IS AN ASSET, IT IS NOT AS IMPORTANT A TEACHER QUALIFICATION AS BEING WELL-TRAINED IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, (2) CLASSES OF MORE THAN 15 CHILDREN ARE TOO BIG FOR EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE WORK, AND (3) IN SPITE OF VARIATIONS IN THE SIZE AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE CLASSROOM, A WELL-TRAINED AND MOTIVATED TEACHER WITH AN ORGANIZED PROGRAM CAN TEACH EFFECTIVELY. AN ANNOTATED LIST OF BOOKS AND PERIODICALS IN THE FIELD OF ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES IS INCLUDED. THE FILM "STARTING ENGLISH EARLY" IS 16MM WITH SOUND, AND SELLS FOR $275.00 PER COPY. RENTAL FEES ARE $12.50 A DAY OR $20.00 FOR THREE DAYS. FOR INFORMATION WRITE TO MISS EVELYN LANE, ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION FACILITIES, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES 90024. (AMM)

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STARTING ENGLISH EARLY

(UCLA-NDEA film)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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English Department

University of California, Los Angeles

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STARTING ENGLISH EARLY

A Guide and Commentary

Lois McIntosh
Associate Professor of English
University of California
Los Angeles
1967

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We wish to express our thanks and appreciation for the help from all the following who made Starting English Early possible.

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Next, Mrs. Virginia Dominguez of the Los Angeles City Schools who arranged for the children, and Mrs. Angie Stockwell who rode with them on the bus.

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Introduction

The purpose of "Starting English Early" is to demonstrate techniques of teaching English as a second language to children of elementary school age. In the many classrooms of this country, there are children who do not speak English trying to keep up with those who do. Those of you concerned with this problem know that good materials and effective ways to use them are very much needed.

This thirty minute color film is based on the daily activities of Spanish speaking children who made up a demonstration class in English as a Second Language offered by the NDEA Institute at UCLA during the summer of 1966. The activities of the summer centered around certain principles of good language teaching.

One principle states that a second language is best achieved somewhat the way the first language was...through hearing and imitating the speakers around us. However, it took most of us six or more years to acquire our first language before we attempted to read or write it. The learner acquiring a second language, particularly a language that will be used for his education, has far less time in which to do it. The very young learner must have a solid base of hearing and speaking the new language before he learns to read and write it. Instead of six years of constant practice, he must acquire his second language in a matter of weeks and months.

This limited time must be used efficiently. The learner needs focused and systematic practice in hearing and speaking the basic sentences of the new language. These sentences should be presented a step at a time and practised repeatedly. Vocabulary---the acquisition of

new words per se---should be kept to a minimum as he acquires control of the spoken grammar of the language.

Lessons developed from a contrastive analysis of the learner's first language compared to the system of the second language will focus on those features that will make learning the new language difficult. Such an analysis points up specific differences and likenesses between the two and can serve as one basis for determining the order in which the new sentences are to be presented.

Where language learners represent several different first language backgrounds, use of information from contrastive analysis becomes more complicated. A systematic description of English, and a step by step sequence of the structures to be learned is still essential for effective language acquisition.

While all language learners will benefit from lessons that are derived from meaningful situations, the young learner has particular needs. Direct experience in the new language can take many forms. An object held in the hand and talked about has more meaning than a picture. Complicated pictures mean little or nothing to young children. When a picture is used, it should be a simple drawing with a few easily identifiable objects. Children's limited span of attention, their need for change of pace, their delight in playing---all make varied activities essential.

Each language lesson should have a behavioral objective. That is, it should clearly state what the learner ought to be able to do and say in the new language at the conclusion of the activities. Beginning with control by the teacher---in that she models language and furnishes it for the students to imitate, the lesson progresses with a gradual release

of control, and the child's choice of language becomes freer. This progression from control or manipulation of language to its ultimate use in free communication determines what activities are followed and the order in which they are presented.

"Starting English Early" shows a master demonstration teacher using linguistically oriented materials and methods with five and six year old Mexican-American children from the public school system of Los Angeles. They came by bus to UCLA, a ride of an hour and a half, every week day for eight weeks. Their teacher, Mrs. Krear, devoted some forty hours of the total eighty to systematic language instruction based on the California 200 Series. This Series will furnish linguistically oriented materials in English for non-English speaking learners in the elementary schools of California.

The importance of sequencing cannot be overstressed. Each lesson builds on the one before it, and in the early weeks, a very heavy load of grammar must somehow be absorbed and conquered. By just using the few sentences shown in the first lesson of the film, the children are learning to use, or are continuing to practice, all these structures:

a and an as markers of nouns	(an apple, a peach)
questions with do and does	(What do you have?)
negatives with don't and doesn't	
short responses to questions:	yes, he does
	no, he doesn't
pronoun substitution:	I, he, she

The forty lessons follow a carefully organized sequence based on a contrastive analysis of Spanish and English. On the basis of this analysis, the writers decided to begin the series---not with BE, as so many

early lessons do---but with HAVE for these reasons: Spanish speakers can learn sentences with AM, IS, ARE quite easily because of the similarity between these forms and their own SER and ESTAR. They do not have anything resembling the English auxiliaries DO and DOES, which play such a major role in question and negative structures. The writers decided to introduce this more-difficult-to-learn feature first---but reducing the difficulty because there would be no confusion with AM, IS, ARE. The children in this class acquired satisfactory control of the DO'S and DON'TS. In the first lesson in the film, part of this process is shown in the sentences: yes, he does; yes, she does.

Following is a text of the lesson shown first on the film. Certain features of the original Project 200 Lesson have been changed for clearer film presentation. These changes include the use of objects instead of cutouts, the use of the children's real names, and the form of the guessing game used as the test. (Each lesson ends in some form of test, calling for individual performance by each learner). The text reproduced here follows the sequencing and format of the early trial lessons of the guide, but varies in the details mentioned above.

TEXT OF THE FIRST LESSON TAUGHT IN THE FILM

I. OBJECTIVES

A. Content

1. Learner will be able to ask the question:

Does [Joe / Jane] have [a / an] _____?

2. Learner will be able to respond to the above question with:

Yes, [he / she] does.

No, [he / she] doesn't.

3. New vocabulary:

a dog a cat

4. The learner will be able to pronounce [ə] in unstressed words like <u>does</u>, <u>a</u>, and <u>an</u> as in:

Does Joe have an eraser?

Does Jane have a doll?

B. Test

1. Four children face the class. Each has an object---an eraser, a banana, a doll, a box. Each child hides the object behind him. The other children guess what he has.

Example:

DOES JOSÉ HAVE AN ERASER?

YES, HE DOES.

DOES MOISES HAVE A DOLL?

NO, HE DOESN'T.

This summarizing activity brings together the sentences in the lesson.

<u>Teaching Points</u>

a. Yes-no questions with <u>does</u>.

b. Subjects <u>Joe</u> and <u>Jane</u> go with <u>does</u>.

c. <u>He</u> replaces a masculine name while <u>she</u> replaces a feminine name.

d. The unstressed schwa [ə].

<u>Likely Errors</u>

a. *Do José have an orange?—→ Does José have an orange?

b. *Does Jane has an orange?—→ Does Jane have an orange?

c. *<u>He</u> for <u>Jane</u>—→ <u>She</u> for <u>Jane</u>.

d. *<u>She</u> for <u>José</u>—→ <u>He</u> for <u>José</u>.

e. *[ə] —→ [ə] in <u>does</u>.

II. MATERIALS

Objects: apple eraser box toy dog

banana pencil doll toy cat

III. PROCEDURES

A. Review

1. Teacher models this dialogue using two puppets and naming them after the children in the class:

   HI, JOSÉ. HI, ABIGAIL.

   WHAT DO YOU HAVE? I HAVE A PENCIL.

2. Give an apple to a boy and a doll to a girl.

   MARY, ASK JOE WHAT JOHN HAS.

   Mary: JOE, WHAT DOES JOHN HAVE?

   Joe: HE HAS AN APPLE.

3. Repeat step 2 by having someone ask about the child holding the doll.

B. Presentation

1. Continue from the Review. Give the apple to another child.

   Model: (3). Echo: ● (3). (Shaded circle = choral response)

   SHE HAS AN APPLE. Point to Jane.
   SHE HAS AN APPLE. Pupils point to Jane.

2. Model: (3). Echo: ● (3), ◎. (Dot in circle = individual response)

   DOES [JOE / JANE] HAVE AN APPLE?

   YES, [HE / SHE] DOES.

   DOES [JOE / JANE] HAVE AN APPLE?

   YES, [HE / SHE] DOES.

3. Response: ● (2), ◎ (3).

   DOES [JANE / JOE] HAVE AN APPLE?

   YES, [SHE / HE] DOES.

   NO, [SHE / HE] DOESN'T.

4. Have children come up and stand around your desk or table on which you have placed the following: an orange, an apple, an egg, a banana, and a cookie. Give John a banana and Mary a cookie.

   DOES JOHN HAVE AN APPLE? 1st L: NO, HE DOESN'T. HE HAS A BANANA. DOES MARY HAVE A COOKIE?

   2nd L: YES, SHE DOES.

   Give two different objects to two other children and continue.

5. Hold up the toy cat.

   Model (2), Echo: (2).

   A CAT. A CAT.

6. Give the toy cat to Joe.

   Response: (2), (3).

   WHAT DOES JOE HAVE? HE HAS A CAT.

7. Repeat steps 7 and 8 with toy dog.

C. Pronunciation

1. Hold up a picture of a dog.

   Model: (3). Echo: (3), .

   A DOG. A DOG.

2. Give picture of dog to Joe.

   DOES JOE HAVE A DOG?

3. Model: (3). Echo: (3), .

   DOES JOE HAVE A DOG? DOES JOE HAVE A DOG?

   YES, HE DOES. YES, HE DOES.

4. As suggested in Lesson 4, help those students who seem to be having difficulty with the schwa [ə] sound by demonstrating (and having them imitate) how the muscles in the mouth are relaxed when this sound is made.

PROCEED TO TEST OF OBJECTIVES ON PAGE 5.

Notes to the teacher:

1. The teacher should ask himself these questions:

   (a) Am I giving the children enough time to hear the sentences?

   (b) Am I presenting a consistent model? Do I hold the sentence steady, repeat it the same way each time, so that the children will hear one model they can imitate instead of several varieties?

   (c) Is my speed natural in speed and intonation?

You will notice that the teacher in the picture uses natural American English in that she blends her words, uses contractions, and directs her sentences to the hearer without exaggeration.

2. When the child makes mistakes---as every learner will---

   (a) Correct the more obvious errors. If you try to correct everything at the same time, he will be confused.

   (b) Focus on one or two difficulties in each lesson (see the sample lesson for suggestions).

   (c) Model the correction for the child and let him imitate you. Explanations will not help---practice will.

   (d) If after one or two tries, he still can't do it, leave him and come back to him later with the same sentence.

3. Variation of activity

   To the uninitiated observer, many of the activities in this film will look like play. But it is play with a purpose---the purpose of furnishing further language practice.

   (a) Activities controlled by the teacher. The language is modeled by him. The children imitate and follow.

      (1) Substitution drills. To practice a given grammatical structure, repetition is ensured by changing one item in the sentence.

         Example: Does José have an apple?
                  Does José have a pencil?

         As the children see the object and name it as the substitute, they are also practising does--Subject--verb.

      (2) Minimal Pair drills.

         Purpose: to help the student hear the small change in sound- a vowel or a consonant-that changes meaning.

         Example: ship---sheep
         Pictures of the ship and the sheep establish their meaning and show the difference as the children begin to hear the

difference. They listen, and learn to identify the first vowel sound or the second. Later, on cue, they produce the first or the second.

A drill of this sort can be used effectively if the cues are tangible, and if the activity is carried out briefly and briskly. Most oral production will be derived from imitation and practice. A few cues about lip placement or tongue position can be helpful too.

The young learner must not be exposed to theoretical presentations of speech organs nor to drills with meaningless material.

(3) Puppets.

Purpose: to help the child communicate through another personality. Children will identify with a puppet readily and produce language they might be too shy to do on their own.

Puppets come in many sizes and shapes. Little boy and girl heads that fit on knuckles - glove type animal heads (as in the film). Paper bags, with faces painted on, are also possible.

Their function is to help the child forget himself and to identify with the puppets. They can be used to stimulate question asking and they can be used to test language control.

(4) Simon says.

As soon as children understand that they must do what Simon says, comprehension of English commands can begin. To change pace - Simon says "stand up" or "walk around" or "skip" - and the children respond with actions.

(5) Change of pace and setting should run through all the activities - small children can't sit too long at desks. When they move to the rug and sit in front of the teacher, the lesson goes on with better attention from all.

Frequent breaks in the activity are desirable - each one with a purpose - the children are listening and responding to commands; they are picking up and identifying objects - they ask questions or guess what someone is doing - all actions - but all with the aim in mind of more language use.

(b) Transition activities: to help the learner use language more independently.

After he has imitated modeled utterances and repeated them in varied settings, he should begin to use them somewhat on his own.

Chain drills: The teacher starts a drill by asking the first child a question. (The question and answer have been practiced earlier.) The child answers, and indirectly cued asks the next child.

Example: Teacher: José, do you have a brother?
José: Yes, I do.
Teacher: Ask Imelda if she has a brother.
José to Imelda: Do you have a brother?

As the question and answer go around the class, the teacher reduces the amount of cueing. The question and answer exchange is a small step toward freer communication.

Role playing: a hat makes a boy a policeman. The children in the film are just beginning to assume their roles, and the teacher has to model for them. The roles once learned were applied again and again with increasing independence on the part of the learners.

Story telling: lends itself to endless role playing - each child "being" Red Ridinghood or the Mother Duck. If the language of the story is too advanced or not consistent with the spoken language, change it.

"It is I" becomes "It's me."
"Begone!" becomes "Go away."

The story will not lose its interest and the language can be used in other situations.

Songs: can serve in several ways. The young learners in this film were enthusiastic singers and dancers. The song "Put it by the box" written by Barry Johnson led them to produce, over and over,

Put it by the box
Put it in the box
Put it on the box

A shoe box, a pencil, and a catchy tune provided many minutes of practice with prepositions.

Tinkle, tinkle, little bell
Yes, I hear you very well

provided opportunities to produce the /l/ that follows vowels. The bell-ringer in the film was so enchanted with his role that he didn't join in - but the others did - and one day without prompting sang it on the way to the playground.

(c) Finally, we provide them with experiences which will call for freer use of the language they have been practicing under more controlled circumstances. These experiences follow the language lesson so that the child will have the second language resource in which to express it.

(1) Nutrition: not shown on the film because of technical problems, this daily activity gave practice in the following:

Do you want a cookie?	Thank you.
Do you want some juice?	Yes, I do.
Do you need a straw?	No, I don't.
Do you need a napkin?	I have one.

Every child had a turn at distributing the daily snack. Do you want became would you like in later sessions. Daily practice made for control of these useful sentences.

(2) Field trips: the playground at the University Elementary School, the walks around the grounds, the parking structure at UCLA - all these were used for furthering language control.

To teachers far from southern California, with its outdoor living, we would say that a walk anywhere can be productive if the children are led to identify or ask about everything in their paths. Once the children learn the verbs see and hear...they can hear bells...or sirens...see birds...or traffic lights.

As they climb stairs, they can chant with their teacher---"up, up, up." They can point out objects---I like this one; I want that one.

Every activity should lead to language development. In the playground scene, as the children look at the animal book, they are labelling the animals father, mother, baby because of their lessons on kinship terms in the classroom. As they slide and swing, they can tell what they're doing because their lessons have prepared them.

Summary:

In addition to the underlying assumptions discussed earlier in this guide, a successful language class for young learners also depends on the following:

The teacher: The teacher in this film is bilingual in Spanish and English. But this is not as important a qualification as her training and experience in the teaching of English as a second language. Her command of good, standard spoken English is basic to her success. But native speakers of a language should not be expected to teach that language without training.

The size of the class: Classes of more than fifteen children are too big for effective language work. In many situations only half an hour a day is set aside for this activity. Even if the teacher is working from a guide of carefully sequenced structures with suggestions for implementing the material, he is hard put to accomplish his aims if the class is too large.

The lesson should move from choral repetition to repetition by part of the class, and then to individual response. To listen to more than fifteen individuals, correct them, and let them try again is almost impossible in that limited time. A group of ten children would have a better opportunity.

The environment: The classrooms of the United States are varied in size and attractiveness. But wherever the children gather, if they have a trained teacher who likes them and wants them to learn, a few objects to handle and talk about, and an organized program to follow, learning should be possible.

In "Starting English Early" you have seen what can be done: In eight weeks, an hour a day, with carefully sequenced lessons, a teacher who used every means to provide practice and help...all this has given fifteen Spanish-speaking children a start in English. They can understand much more than they can produce independently---but a start has been made that will serve them well as they acquire their education not in their own first language---but in their second.

BOOKS

Allen, Harold, editor, Teaching English as a Second Language, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965.

A collection of readings which should be an aid to increasing the teachers' knowledge of theory in language teaching.

Bruner, Jerome, Toward a Theory of Instruction, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966.

A series of non-technical essays exploring the relation between the course of intellectual development and pedagogy based on years of research on the intellectual development of young children.

Bumpass, Faye L., Teaching Young Students English as a Foreign Language, New York: American Book Co., 1963.

A guide for teachers of foreign languages, oriented to broad general principles of linguistics and educational psychology. It is presented in non-technical language, includes a discussion of audio-visual materials, and analyzes course content and evaluative criteria.

Dacanay, F. R. and J. D. Bowen, Techniques and Procedures in Second-Language Teaching, Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House, 1963.

This book offers detailed suggestions on effective techniques and procedures useful in teaching a second language to children.

Finocchiaro, Mary, Teaching Children Foreign Languages, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964.

"This book will provide teachers and administrators with the theory and practice necessary for introducing effective programs in the elementary schools..."

Prator, Clifford H., Jr., Manual of American English Pronunciation, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1951.

A practical treatment of English pronunciation which should be of great value to teachers of English.

Rivers, Wilga, The Psychologist and the Foreign-Language Teacher, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964.

A critical appraisal of foreign language teaching in the light of recent conclusions in psychology on the learning process made with the classroom teacher in mind.

Roberts, Paul, Understanding English, New York: Harper and Row, 1958.

"This book is an attempt to relate the complicated data of linguistic science to the equally complicated purposes of the course in English."

Thomas, Owen, Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965.

A pedagogical presentation of the most recent major development in American linguistics, Transformational Grammar Theory.

PERIODICALS

TESOL Journal, first issue at TESOL Conference, April, 1967. A new journal for teachers of English which will have materials of interest to elementary teachers of TESOL.

ENGLISH, a new language publication by the Office of Education of the Commonwealth of Australia, P.O. Box 189, North Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING, published by the Oxford University Press.

LANGUAGE LEARNING, published by English Language Institute, University of Michigan.

THE LINGUISTIC REPORTER, published by the Center for Applied Linguistics of the Modern Language Association of America, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C.

While most of these journals are geared for adults, they comprise the professional literature in the field of English Second Language teaching.

Information:

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Rental: $12.50 a day, or $20.00 for three days

Write to: Miss Evelyn Lane
Academic Communication Facilities
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

The California 200 project, when completed will consist of three hundred lessons for first and second year language levels. Materials will be distributed by the State Board of Education.